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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

MALTA G.C.

MONTHLY AGRICULTURAL REVIEW

JANUARY, 1950.

GENERAL - The weather was cool and wet and a rainfall of 4.25" to 6.65" was registered. The temperature was almost constant averaging 58°F. The maximum temperature in the sun was 119°F with a daily average of 6.1 hours of sunshine. In general, weather conditions benefited crops and the lifting of vegetables ready for marketing. Preparation of the soil for the sowing of spring potatoes, the grafting and pruning of vines, the hoeing of weeds round orange trees and ploughing operations were carried out without difficulty.

MARKETING - The brassica crop was in fair supply, though in decreasing quantities. Prices increased accordingly. Supply of root crops was constant. While there was a slight decrease in the supply of potatoes and onions, the price of potatoes was maintained at a low level. Efforts made for the export of a surplus stock of potatoes from the winter crop were unsuccessful. Market garden crops utilised for foliage were in increased supply. Supplies of citrus fruits decreased during the month. Supplies of local eggs increased and a decrease in price followed. Inspections were carried out on pitkali and greengrocers. Records were taken of current wholesale and retail prices of Agricultural Produce at Pitkali Markets.

POTATOES - The sowing of spring potatoes continued under favourable conditions. The lifting of winter potatoes was completed. Yields were very good and no sign of disease was evident. At the Government Farm seeds of the following seed varieties were sown, viz:- Arran Banner, Arran Peak, Stormont Dawn, Up-to-Date, Ulster Leader, Ulster Supreme, Ulster Chieftain, Arran Pilot and Clerke 961. This seed was supplied, free of charge, by the Government of Northern Ireland for experimental purposes.

CLOVER - A large proportion of the clover seedlings were lost in Autumn owing to the heavy rains at the time. Some fields had to be ploughed up and re-sown with cereals. Seedlings which survived were thriving exceedingly well.

PUBLIC GARDENS & PLANTATIONS - Pruning, staking, hoeing and tying of trees along roads and other open spaces were carried out and 861 ornamental trees, shrubs, etc., were planted. Pruning of ornamental trees and hedges was also carried out. Gardens received care and attention and available land was dug with natural manure and planted with spring flowering annuals. Varieties of bulbs and tubers were also planted for a continuous display of flowers during spring. Available nurseries were restocked with young trees, shrubs and decorative plants in pots. The following sales from Public Gardens in Malta and Gozo were effected, viz:- 2279 doz. Oranges, 1350 doz. Tangerines, 355 doz. Lemons, 436 Fruit trees, 774 Vegetable Seedlings, 88 Plants in pots, and 64 bunches of Flowers.

PLANT PATHOLOGY - Approximately over 10,000 miscellaneous fruit trees, including both vines and stone fruit trees were subjected to treatment. 47 tumoli of land planted with vegetable crops was sprayed. Work on pruning of stone fruit trees, preventive spraying of leguminous and cruciferous crops and late winter treatment to fruit trees was carried out. Throughout the month 46,064 miscellaneous parcels of imported vegetable produce were submitted to phytopathological inspection including 19,980 parcels citrus, 11,993 parcels seed potatoes and 5,363 parcels apples.

VITICULTURE - 212,300 American rootstock were planted in the various nurseries of both islands for subsequent distribution to farmers. Experiments on a comparatively large scale on table grafting of American stock was continued with encouraging prospects. Eight tumoli of Government land were planted to vines for subsequent grafting with choice wine varieties. Sale of Buskett wine (1949 Season) was brisk an indication that this product is meeting with a favourable reception on the local market.

FRUIT CULTURE - 23,000 wild stock of plums, pears and apples arrived from Italy for propagation. The propagation of fruit

seedlings in Gozo was also intensified. To have scions for crafting purposes a selection of fruit trees was made which will serve as future mother plants. The citrus crop was good and imported citrus fruit had to be sold at a low price.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY - Pig breeding continued on a large scale as pre-war. Sporadic cases of Swine Erysipelas and Swine Fever were encountered in the Abattoirs. The high quality of local pork has been maintained. Regular immunisation of Government owned pigs against Swine Erysipelas and Swine Fever continued as a routine measure while propaganda amongst private pig breeders is producing good results in this direction.

The up-grading of Dairy cattle continued and good specimens of Shorthorn, Ayrshire and British Friesian cattle imported from the United Kingdom are gaining in popularity especially the British Friesian which is in great demand. The first crop of calves from these breeds fetched prices well above the average. The pedigree bulls imported from United Kingdom have proved to be good stock getters. The demand for pedigree stock is on the increase. The Saanen-local cross continued to gain popularity and both billies and nannies are much sought after. Sales of chicks of the Maltese Black, Rhode Island Reds and other established breeds of poultry reached unprecedented heights. Vaccination of poultry against fowl typhoid and fowl cholera was carried out as a regular routine measure.

Tuberculin testing of Dairy Cows was also carried out.

The increase in the slaughter rate of food animals was maintained and in the case of pigs this was even higher than during the corresponding month of last year owing to the additional slaughtering for bacon and ham curing by local firms.

Livestock Imports during the month were as follows:-

Species	Country of origin	Number
Store cattle	Bulgaria	250
Store cattle	Benghazi	206
Dairy Cows	Holland	12
Goats	United Kingdom	4
Horses	United Kingdom	2
Donkeys	Tripoli	6

Prices of meat were:-

Beef	Special cuts	@ 5s/- per rotolo.
	Other "	@ 4s/4d " "
Pork	Special cuts	@ 4s/4d per rotolo
	Other "	" 4s/- " "
Lard	@ 2s/6d per rotolo (wholesale price)	
Eggs	@ 4s/6d to 4s/- per dozen (wholesale price) @ 5s/- per dozen (retail price).	

BEE KEEPING - In order to stimulate interest amongst bee-keepers, a National Bee-keepers Association was formed on the initiative of the Department of Agriculture.

A Committee was set up and rules were approved at a general meeting. Members are showing keen interest in this new venture and it is trusted that progress in this Branch of Agriculture will be made in the immediate future.

SOIL PRESERVATION ORDINANCE OF 1935 - The preservation of fertile soil is an activity of the Department to which great importance is attached.

During the month under review, 46 inspections on new building sites were carried out in order to ascertain that the provisions of the Fertile Soil Ordinance, 1935, were being observed. During the month, 675 cubic yards of soil were saved.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND ADVISORY WORK - Various subjects of topical interest to farmers, livestock breeders and amateurs were broadcast during the Sunday morning half hour talk by the Department and through the publication of the monthly journal "Il-Bidwi" (THE FARMER).

In the field, advice was given to farmers with the limited staff available.

In order to obtain better contact with the farming community, village committees are being organized and an Agricultural Committee at Naxxar has been set up.

...../Some weights

SOME WEIGHTS & MEASURES. MALTESE & ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS

1. Weights	1 rotolo	-	1.75 lbs
	1 qantar (100 rotoli)	-	175 "
	1,280 rotoli	-	1 ton
2. Measures			
a) Wine	1 barile	-	9,50 gallons
b) Land	1 tumolo	-	0.27 acres
	(a tumolo is a square having each side 110 feet long.)		
	3.6 tumoli	-	1 acre
	1 salma (16 tumoli)	-	4.4 acres
c) Volume	1 salma (16 tumoli) (96 mondelli)	-	64 gallons or 1 quarter.

NOTE:

For sulla and straw, in Malta 1 soma is a load of 10 bundles. In Gozo, 1 soma is a load of 8 bundles, but the weight per load is roughly the same as in Malta.

AVERAGE PRICES REALISED BY PRODUCERS:-

Wheat	£6.15. -.	per quarter
Barley	4. -. -.	" "
Carobs	1. -. -.	per qantar
Vetches	7. -. -.	per quarter
Potatoes (winter)	-.19. 2	per qantar
Sulla	-. 7. -	per soma
Onions (DRY)	1.10. 5	per qantar
Citrus Fruits:-		
Oranges	-. 1. 7¾	per dozen
Tangerines	-. 1.11¾	" "
Lemons	-. -.11¾	" "